

- 22 -

C L A I M S

1. A utilization method within a communication network comprising at least one service provider (36; 38) and at least one service consumer (32), wherein the service provider (36; 38) provides services for the service consumer (32), said method comprises the steps of:

- a) receiving a service request message from the service consumer (32);
- b) generating a meter event request associated with the service request;
- c) comparing the actual content of a cache memory (70) with at least one parameter (CEP, CFP);
- d) storing the meter event request in the cache memory (70), if this is allowed depending on said comparison; or
- e) sending the meter event request and the content of the cache memory (70) to a metering service (52) in order to process the meter event requests, if the meter event request may not be stored in the cache memory (70) depending on said comparison;

characterized in that ,
said at least one parameter (CEP, CFP) is associated with the service request and a predefined convention, and said parameter (CEP, CFP) defines, if and how many meter event requests may be stored in the cache memory (70).

2. The method of claim 1, wherein step c) comprises the step of: evaluating a status of a boolean parameter (CEP) which indicates, if the meter event request is allowed to be stored in the cache memory (70) or not.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein step c) further comprises the following steps, if the meter event request is allowed to be stored in the cache memory (70):

- 23 -

- evaluating a value of an integer parameter (CFP) associated with the boolean parameter (CEP); and
- comparing said value of the integer parameter (CFP) with the content of the cache memory (70).

4. The method of claim 3, wherein step e) comprises the following steps, if the actual number of the meter event requests in the cache memory (70) equals or increases the value of the integer parameter (CFP):

- sending the meter event request to the metering service (52) in order to process the meter event request; and
- deleting the content of the cache memory (70).

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the meter event request is stored in the cache memory (70), if the actual number of the meter event requests in the cache memory (70) is less than said value of the integer parameter (CFP).

6. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the convention is predefined in a license contract which relates to the kinds and amount of services between the service provider (36, 38) and the service consumer (32).

7. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein after receiving the service request message a relevant information is separated from the service request message.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the relevant information of the service request message includes request data, contract data, license data, the boolean parameter (CEP), the integer parameter (CFP) and/or the identity of the service consumer (32).

- 24 -

9. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said method further comprises the steps of:

- counting the services when the associated meter event request is sent to the metering service (52); and
- sending the actual counting results to the service provider (36; 38) and/or to the service consumer (32).

10. The method of claim 9, wherein each kind of the offered services is counted separately.

11. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the communication network is a computer network appropriate to provide web services.

12. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said method is a license contract validation method, said license contract defines the kinds and the amount of services between the service provider (36, 38) and the service consumer (32).

13. A utilization system within a communication network comprising at least one service provider (36; 38) and at least one service consumer (32), wherein the service provider (36; 38) provides services for the service consumer (32), said system comprises the components of:

- an input device (59) for receiving a service request message from the service consumer (32);
- a generator (62) for generating a meter event request associated with the service request;
- a cache memory (70) for storing the meter event requests;
- a cache controller (66) for controlling the cache memory (70); and

- 25 -

- an invocator (72) for sending the meter event requests to a metering service (52) in order to process the meter event requests;

characterized in that ,
said system comprises a cache enabler (64) for evaluating, if any meter event request may be stored in the cache memory (70), and a monitor (68) for evaluating, how many meter event requests may be stored in a cache memory (70), depending on at least one parameter (CEP, CFP) associated with the request and a predefined convention.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the cache enabler (64) is provided for evaluating a status of a boolean parameter (CEP) which indicates, if the meter event request may be stored in the cache memory (70).

15. The system of claim 13 or 14, wherein the monitor (68) is provided for evaluating a status of an integer parameter (CFP) which indicates, how many meter event requests may be stored in the cache memory (70).

16. The system according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said input device (59) is coupled with a message context separator (60) for separating the relevant information from the service request message.

17. The system according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the system comprises a counter for counting the requested services when associated meter event requests has been sent to the metering service (52).

18. The system according to any of the preceding claims, wherein said system is provided for a utilization method according to any of the preceding claims 1 to 12.

- 26 -

19. The system according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the system is realized in hardware, software or a combination of hardware and software.

20. A computer program product stored on a computer usable medium, comprising computer readable program means for causing a computer to perform a method according to anyone of the preceding claims 1 to 12.